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Turkestan RL1

[Uigur]
[Dungan]

land for settlement purposes as well as exemptions from taxes for a period of ten years. The new subjects of the Russian Empire proved to be an asset, both economically and culturally, in South-East Kazakhstan and Kirghizistan. After 1881, in the Semirechie district on the skirts of China, the Uigurs founded sixty settlements. Most of the settlements survived the revolution and Soviet statistics mention the existence of forty-five Uigur villages in the same area. They are forming a 'Uigur National District' which is part of the Alma Ata Province of Kazakhstan. The Uigurs also have over sixty National Collective Farms in Uzbekistan.

Tu. 563

Tu. 162

The total number of Uigurs in the Soviet Union, together with ethnical groups who are practically identical with them, can be placed with some certainty in the neighbourhood of 100,000. In regard to the Dungans, Soviet statistics mention a total figure of 14,600 for the whole Soviet Union, but that figure would seem to be an understatement. The Dungans have been allotted a special 'National District' in Kazakhstan and have fifteen National Collective Farms in Kirghizistan.[59]

Tu. 563 658

Considering their small numerical strength the two national minorities enjoy the use of a comparatively large number of cultural institutions. As many as five newspapers, two theatres (one each in Alma Ata and Andizhan) and two teachers' training colleges are at the disposal of the Uigurs, while the Dungans have two newspapers and a teachers' training college in addition to a Dungan department in the teachers' training college of Frunze. An Uigur-Dungan department has also been attached to the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan.

S.U. 563 721

Such liberality by the Soviet authorities may be explained by the political-military role of considerable importance which, in addition to the economic and cultural one, the Uigurs and Dungans had all along been called to play. Having settled down in the Russo-Chinese frontier area the Uigurs and Dungans took upon themselves the tasks usually reserved for Russian and Ukrainian settlers. In the cultural and economic fields the Uigurs and Dungans exercised a stabilizing and beneficial influence on their nomad surroundings. In the domain of politics, thanks to their anti-Chinese outlook, they provided Russian frontier districts with a human wall as reliable as if composed of Russian colonists themselves.

S.U 563 648

From the point of view of Soviet diplomatic strategy the Uigurs, who are the largest people in multi-national Sinkiang, are by far the more important of the two. The 2,900,000 Uigurs of Sinkiang are, however, split up into a large number of communities so isolated from each other that it has been difficult to deal with them as a real national unit. Soviet nationalities policy, taking the Soviet Uigurs as a basis, may assist them to develop a clearer national consciousness.

During the decade of active Soviet interference (1933–43) in the